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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council President expresses concern about deteriorating political situation and reports of ethnic killings in Burundi; calls on all parties to work for national reconciliation and stability.

+ Government offensives in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina decrease in intensity; three Pakistani UNPROFOR personnel killed in road accident in Croatia.

+ Security Council sets 12 July as date for election to fill impending vacancy on International Court of Justice.

+ Multinational Force in Haiti finalizes plans for transition to UNMIH on 31 March.

+ Argentina tells Human Rights Committee pardons given to members of former military junta did not erase their crimes, but shortened their sentences.

+ Legal Subcommittee of Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to hold thirty-fourth session in Vienna from 27 March to 13 April.

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The Security Council today expressed concern about recent serious developments in Burundi. In remarks to correspondents, Council President Li Zhaoxing (China) said that the political situation in the country had deteriorated, and that there had been reports of ethnic killings there. He called on all parties concerned to stop the killings and to work for national reconciliation and political and social stability.

Also today, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Chinmaya Gharekhan briefed the Council on the death of 24 prisoners by asphyxiation at a jail in Rwanda on Sunday. Rwanda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

(more)

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informed the Council that financial difficulties had led to overcrowding in the country's prisons.

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The Bosnian Government's military offensives in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina decreased in intensity today, although fighting continued north of Tuzla, according to a United Nations spokesman. He noted that heavy snow may have been a factor in that development, and that the Bosnian Government had severely limited the freedom of movement of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the area.

Bosnian Serb harrassment of UNPROFOR through hijackings of vehicles and thefts of equipment has almost become a daily occurrence, the spokesman continued. Danish peace-keepers were forced out of their jeep at gun-point yesterday to the north-west of Sarajevo, while weapons and ammunition were seized from British peace-keepers on the airport road. Meanwhile in Croatia, three Pakistani UNPROFOR personnel were killed, and five were injured, in a road accident.

The spokesman went on to say that UNPROFOR hoped to resume flights into Sarajevo tomorrow, barring any serious incidents in the meantime. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expected to resume the humanitarian airlift into the city on Saturday.

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The Security Council today decided on 12 July as the date for the election to fill the impending vacancy on the International Court of Justice. A seat will become vacant on 10 July following the resignation of Judge Sir Robert Yewdall Jennings (United Kingdom).

By unanimously adopting resolution 980 (1995), the Council set the date for its simultaneous meeting with the General Assembly to elect a new member of the Court. Under the Court's Statute, the Assembly and the Council vote independently of one another, and the candidate who obtains an absolute majority in both is elected.

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The Multinational Force in Haiti has said it is continuing to finalize plans for the transition to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) on 31 March. UNMIH personnel have been arriving steadily, while there are more than 7,100 Multinational Force personnel and some 650 international police monitors in the country. The Force's final report, covering the period 6 to 19 March, was transmitted to the Security Council by the United States in a document dated 20 March.

According to the report, Port-au-Prince enjoyed the safest carnival season in at least eight years thanks to public awareness campaigns and a detailed security plan. There was an increase in the number of murders between 12 and 14 March, but patrols by international police monitors and the

Multinational Force were stepped up in affected areas. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide also made public remarks stressing the importance of the rule of law and reconciliation, and the number of incidents of violence and popular summary "justice" fell significantly.

The Multinational Force has been assisting in the improvement of the Interim Public Security Forces. It has also been working closely with the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) Commission in analyzing human rights and prison reform issues.

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The pardons given to members of the military junta that formerly ruled Argentina have not erased their crimes, but rather shortened their sentences, according to the Director-General for Human Rights of Argentina's Foreign Ministry. Zelmira Regazzoli told the Human Rights Committee at Headquarters yesterday that anyone wishing to institute proceedings concerning violations of human rights during the period of military rule might do so. For 25 years, there had been no enjoyment of political or civil rights, but the Government of Argentina now recognized that all human rights were indivisible and interdependent.

As the Human Rights Committee examined Argentina's report on its compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Ms. Regazzoli said there had been no enjoyment of civil and political rights for 25 years. Now, however, the Government recognized that all human rights were indivisible and interdependent.

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The Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will hold its thirty-fourth session in Vienna from 27 March to 13 April. The Subcommittee aims to formulate universally acceptable international agreements on a wide range of space-related issues.

At its upcoming session, the Subcommittee will focus on three main issues: whether there is a need to review or revise the principles adopted by the General Assembly in 1992 governing the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in light of subsequent technological developments; definition and delimitation of outer space; and draft principles governing legal issues involved in ensuring that all States share the benefits of space exploration and research.

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